UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/22376
22 March 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 22 MARCH 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KUWAIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government and further to our note dated 14 March 1991 concerning Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees, we wish to communicate the following:

From 2 August 1990 to 9 March 1991, Iraq did not permit the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to register Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees. On 9 March Iraq for the first time permitted ICRC delegates to visit the camps of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and to interview them in private in order to register them. Such registration, however, was confined to the detention camps at Mosul and Tikrit.

As a result of this activity, up to 14 March ICRC transmitted to the Kuwaiti Government 2,305 prisoner cards and 424 detainee cards, i.e., a total of 2,729 cards. Kuwait agreed to receive all the Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and to carry out a final check against the lists after the prisoners and detainees had been handed over.

Concerning the 1,181 Kuwaiti civilians who returned from the city of Basra on 8 March, it is clear that they were not registered or even visited by ICRC owing to the fact that, as stated above, the registration of prisoners and detainees did not begin until 9 March. The fact of the matter is that an agreement was reached between the Iraqi authorities and the ICRC delegates concerning the release of some civilians in the Basra area on that day at 10 o'clock in the morning, at which time the Kuwaiti Human Rights Committee was making the necessary arrangements for their transport and accommodation; the Iraqi authorities, however, released them in the city of Basra at 1 a.m. on 8 March and left them to wander aimlessly through the streets without any protection. Thus a large number of them walked great distances until, in pitiful condition, they reached points held by the allied forces on the Kuwaiti border. This took place without it being possible for the competent authorities to register them or ascertain their identity or nationality.

I request you to have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed A. ABULHASAN
Permanent Representative